

Washington, DC –A key law enforcement group has voiced their support for Harry Teague's national "Katie's Law". Today, Congressman Harry Teague announced that the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), the largest organization representing the interests of America's state and local prosecutors, has joined the growing group in support of the Katie Sepich Enhanced DNA Collection Act (H.R. 4614). The Teague-sponsored legislation is a bipartisan DNA collection bill that encourages states to maximize the potential of forensic DNA to solve and prevent violent crimes by collecting a DNA sample upon arrest – at the same time as fingerprints -- for certain felony crimes.

"As long as individual states have not passed arrestee DNA collection laws, our national DNA database is not as effective as it could be – simply put, we can all do better to make America's communities safer," NDAA President Christopher Chiles wrote in the letter to Congressman Teague. "America's criminal justice system still doesn't effectively use all the new technology available to state and local law enforcement to identify violent criminals. Passing H.R. 4614 into law will give America's law enforcement officials the tools they need to prevent violent crime in our communities and bring violent offenders to justice."

The announcement of the NDAA's support follows last week's endorsement by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization.

"Katie's Law is a common-sense piece of legislation that will allow law enforcement officers to use all available DNA technology to help keep our communities safe. Utilizing modern technology and the advanced science of DNA evidence in the same way fingerprints are used today will not only increase our country's efficiency in identifying violent criminals, but also save lives," said Harry Teague. "I am happy to announce the NDAA's support and look forward to working with them to take this important law nationwide."

Katie's Law is named after Katie Sepich, from Carlsbad, New Mexico, who was 22 years old when she was brutally raped and murdered. DNA under Katie's fingernails helped the police develop a DNA profile for her killer and this profile was included in the national database where all DNA samples are kept. Three years later in 2006, the New Mexico DNA database finally matched the unknown profile to Gabriel Avilla who had been arrested for several other crimes, including a felony burglary in November 2003. Katie's Law was not enacted in New Mexico until January of 2007. If New Mexico had required a DNA sample for Avilla's felony arrest in November 2003, investigators might have solved Katie's murder sooner and caught Avilla before he was left free to roam the streets for three years.

Congressman Harry Teague has been working with Katie's parents, Jayann and David Sepich of Carlsbad to develop a national Katie's Law that calls for the Justice Department to work with law enforcement in every state to make sure that they are, at the least, matching certain arrestees to the national DNA bank - the Combined DNA Information System or the CODIS. Katie's Law will also incentivize those states which not only match arrestees but also contribute to the CODIS in an effort to help save more lives and prevent crime across the country.

[Click here](#) to read the full text of the letter.

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